

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

**Chairman**

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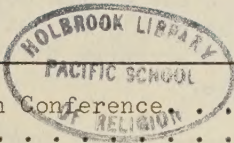
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JAPAN AND KOREAN CHRISTIAN LAYMEN CONFERENCE

Five lay representatives from Korea met with seventy Japanese Christians, most of whom were also laymen, in a series of meetings held in Tokyo, Oiso, and Osaka, Japan, from November 16 - 19, 1964.

These were the first of a series of meetings aimed at developing popular understanding of problems of mutual concern. The next series will take place in Seoul, Korea, late in April, 1965, when five Japanese laymen will return the visit of the Korean team.

Sponsors of the meetings are the National Christian Councils of Japan and Korea. The Korean delegates were: Ryu Dong-sik; seminary professor; Lee Sang-Hong, president of a textile company; Chung Kiel-Whan, physician; Park Sun-Jea, laity secretary of the Korea National Christian Council; and George P. Whitener, treasurer, Korea Mission of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., observer.

The Japanese delegates who will go to Korea in April are: Morizo Ishidate, professor; Toyozo Mikumo, banker; Jiro Nishimura, educator; Sotaro Yamazaki, secretary of laymen's center; Masato Kawamura, chairman of Hiroshima Laymen's Activity Committee.

A committee selected by the participants in the Japan meetings drew up the following statement, following the series of conferences:

- (1) In spite of having differences and having constructed various barriers in the past history of the peoples of Korea and Japan, we re-acknowledge that we are brothers in Christ, The Lord of reconciliation.
- (2) We realize that both of our churches have the duty and responsibility to fight jointly against the many forces which run counter to the gospel. Especially we agree that we must put all of our effort into the building of righteousness and peace in relationships between Korea and Japan.



(3) We agree that we, the laymen of these two churches will cooperate mutually, in concrete ways, to promote freedom, peace, and welfare of the peoples of our two nations. We pledge that we will continue to study and strive for this cause in the future.

It became apparent out of the discussions that efforts to solve such very real problems as economic reparations, the legal status of some 576,000 Koreans living in Japan, and fishing territory rights are complicated by highly charged emotions among people on both sides, resulting from the domination of Korea by Japan from 1905 to 1945. Two different attitudes were expressed by Japanese participants in the conferences. The older Japanese tended to be apologetic for the "sins of the past"; the younger men, who had had no personal involvement in that period of Japanese history, tended to feel that if popular international reconciliation is to take place, it must take place upon a new foundation.

It was generally agreed that one of the most pressing current problems is the fact that Japanese and Koreans simply do not know each other. Legal and travel restrictions make social interchange difficult in spite of the geographical proximity of the two countries.

Both Japanese and Korean laymen spoke frankly about the limited prospectives of their respective churches and the need for more positive expressions of the concept of the brotherhood of all men under God, the Father of all nations.

Two problems discussed in detail were: 1) how to broaden the concepts of Christian faith and action and encourage active participation in the social affairs of each country; 2) how to broaden the concepts of Christian faith and action around the world, stressing especially at this time the need to develop good relations between Japan and Korea.

During the week together, Japanese and Korean delegates were reported to have found that racial characteristics and mannerisms of people of the two countries are strikingly similar. For instance, their own experiments in trying to identify Japanese or Koreans in terms of physical characteristics showed the inaccuracy of common generalizations about differences.

The conference was conducted in Japanese and Korean, although no translation was required for the spoken Japanese.

The Oiso meeting was held at the Christian Academy House, the Osaka meeting at Osaka Christian Center, both laymen-centered movements which frequently sponsor forums of various professional groups of Christians and non-Christians.

#### NEW (RELIGIO) POLITICAL PARTY

The recent organization of the Komeito (Clean Government Party) by the Buddhist Soka Gakkai sect is without parallel in the political history of Japan and will undoubtedly have a profound influence on Japanese religion as well as politics.

Western lands are familiar with Christian political parties but this is the first religious organization in Japan to attempt to directly influence government through political means.

The political arm of Soka Gakkai has heitherto been known as the "Fair Politics League," and has succeeded in gaining 15 seats in the House of Councillors for members of Soka Gakkai. The "League" has now been replaced by a definite political party and will attempt to place members in the House of Representatives.



Komeitō has listed 14 candidates for the House of Councillors and 32 candidates for the House of Representatives for possible election next year. A dissolution of the Diet is forecast for early next year. With electoral resources of approximately 10 million voters, the number of Soka Gakkai members of voting age, the formation of the party is of great importance.

Before an assembly of 15,000, leaders declared in an inaugural statement on November 17 that, with "Buddhist democracy" as the guiding principle, they would promote "mass welfare" and "clean up Japanese politics." The ultimate objective was to be "the establishment of an eternal peace structure for the world,"

Much of its political program resembles that of the Japan Socialist Party-opposition to revision of the National Constitution and testing or use of nuclear weapons, abandonment of U.S. - Japan security agreements and proposal for world disarmament; however, its approach to the electorate is basically different from that of the Socialist party as well as other parties in Japan. It negates the concept of class, claiming to be a party of the "mass;" it does not represent interest groups (except Soka Gakkai!) and is unique in that its doctrinal basis is a traditional Japanese religion.

The atmosphere of the convention was exceptional in that there was a deep quiet pervading the gathering, no cigarette fumes and smoke, and the chairman simply read a list of names of the officers to the enthusiastic applause of the audience.

The progress of the newly organized party will undoubtedly be closely watched by the other political groups and by those opposed to such religious-political movements.

#### INTER-CHURCH VISITATION AND AID

A Japan Church World Service team of eleven Christian laymen, social workers and ministers left Japan by plane on November 11 on a 13-day good will visit to other East Asian countries.

The purpose of the trip is to deepen understanding between Asian churches, study what they may do to help one another, and encourage those engaged in service work.

Leader of the tour is Rev. Kentaro Buma, director, Japan Church World Service.

In Taiwan, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, tour members will visit centers of Church and social work, including hospitals, refugee aid, churches and theological schools.

Such direct contact by Christian laymen with their counterparts in other lands is much desired and necessary today. More meeting on the grass-roots level will be mutually strengthening and give birth to new vision. The development of such channels and encouragement of such movement is a crying need.

#### CURRICULUM WRITERS' CONFERENCE

Thirty-four curriculum writers from the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Southern Baptist Church, the Free



Methodist Church, the American Baptist Church, the Church of Christ, and the Korean Church in Japan gathered at a Conference for Curriculum Writers in Karuizawa on November 11 - 13.

The conference included actual training in writing of curriculum materials as well as theoretical advice. Each participant actually prepared some materials and these efforts were read to the group and suggestions and criticisms offered.

Keynote topics were "Necessary Inclusions in preparing Curriculum Materials" and "Curriculum Vocabulary."

Conference leaders were Miss Misao Akagawa of Seiwa Girls' College and Mr. Kaname Takado of the NCC Literature Commission. Both received training in this field in the U.S. at the 9-week International Writers Seminar at Green Lake, Wisconsin in 1962.

Dr. Saburo Yasumura, was present at the Conference as a resource person and reported on the Furigen World Curriculum Conference which he attended.

Those attending the Conference were enthusiastic in participation and appraisal, expressing the desire to make this an annual program. The Conference was sponsored by the Japan NCC Church School Department.

#### GINGERICH INSTALLED AS MINISTER OF TOKYO UNION CHURCH

Rev. John C. Gingerich, Th. D., was installed as Minister of Tokyo Union Church, Monday evening, November 16, 1964, at a special service in the Sanctuary.

Since its establishment in 1872, the congregation has called five full-time ministers: Rev. Doremus Scudder (1916), Mr. P.P. W. Sieman (1922), Rev. Galen E. Russell (1952), Rev. Howard B. Haines (1958), and Rev. John, C. Gingerich (1964). Many part-time ministers-in-charge have also led the congregation during its 92 years of Church history. These have usually been ministers engaged in missionary work in Tokyo.

Dr. and Mrs. Gingerich arrived in Japan on August 27 with Dr. Gingerich taking up his duties as Minister immediately. He has served the Church in various capacities in Oklahoma, Iowa, Ohio, just recently having served as Minister of Education of North Broadway Methodist Church, Columbus, Ohio, U. S. A.

Assisting in the service were Rev. Walter W. Krider, Chairman of Tokyo Union Church Worship Committee; Rev. Isamu Omura, D.D., Vice Chairman of the NCC of Japan; Mr. Delmar Wedel, President of the congregation; and Mrs. Kay Sebert, organist. Tokyo Union Church is an associate member of the NCC of Japan, and serves the English-speaking community in Tokyo.

#### CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS

A new book, Christian Social Action, written by Rev. Dr. Sam Franklin and published by the Publishing Department of the United Church of Christ in Japan, is being welcomed as an important contribution on the subject of Christian social ethics, which up to this time has not been stressed in Protestant circles in Japan.

Dr. Franklin's book is one of the first attempts since the end of the war to treat Christian social ethics systematically and in a way suitable for use as a textbook. It was developed from his lectures as professor of Christian Social Ethics at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary. The translation was by the Rev. Dr. Hideo Oki, also on the faculty of Tokyo Union Seminary and a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, New York.